

1 (a) TITLE OF THE INVENTION

2
3 COUPLED RESONATOR BULK ACOUSTIC WAVE FILTER
4

5 (b) CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS
6

7 Not Applicable
8

9 (c) STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR
10 DEVELOPMENT

11 The U.S. Government has a paid-up license in this
12 invention and the right in limited circumstances to require the
13 patent owner to license others on reasonable terms as provided for
by the terms of a contract awarded by an agency of the U.S.
Government.

14 (d) REFERENCE TO A "MICROFICHE APPENDIX"
15

16 Not Applicable
17

18 (e) BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION
19

20 1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION
21

22 The invention pertains to thin film acoustic devices.
23 More particularly this invention pertains to thin film, bulk wave
24 acoustic resonators for use as filters at microwave frequencies.
25 A thin film, bulk wave acoustic resonator typically utilizes a
26 thin layer of piezoelectric material that is sandwiched between
27 two thin conducting layers of material to form a resonator. The
28 conducting layers serve as electrodes and when an electrical

voltage, at a microwave frequency, is applied between the two electrodes, the consequent electric field between the electrodes interacts with the piezoelectric material to generate acoustic waves within the piezoelectric material. In a bulk wave, acoustic resonator, acoustic waves propagate in the direction normal to the thin layers of material and the electrical impedance between the two electrodes exhibits a resonance when the acoustic thickness of the combination of the piezoelectric layer and of the two electrodes is approximately one-half of an acoustic wavelength or an odd multiple thereof. In some instances the acoustic waves are acoustic shear waves and in other instances the acoustic waves are acoustic longitudinal waves.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

The fabrication of piezoelectric resonators for use at microwave frequencies is well known in the prior art. See, e.g., the descriptions of such devices in the specification of U.S. Pat. No. 5,894,647 for a "Method for Fabricating Piezoelectric Resonators and Product", Lakin, and see the references to prior art cited therein. See also "Microwave Acoustic Resonators and Filters," by Lakin, Kline and McCarron, IEEE Trans. on Microwave Theory and Techniques, Vol. 41, No. 12, December 1993, p. 2139; Guttwein, Ballato and Lubaszek, U.S. Pat. No. 3,694,677; and "Acoustic Bulk Wave Composite Resonators", Applied Physics Letters 38(3) by Lakin and Wang, Feb. 1, 1981. Such resonators also may be fabricated on, and supported by a

substrate by including a set of intervening layers of material having alternating high and low acoustic impedances, which layers have thicknesses of a quarter wavelength. The intervening layers act as an acoustic mirror that acoustically isolates the resonator from the underlying substrate. See, e.g., U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,414,832 and 5,373,268 and 5,821,833 and 6,291,931. For methods of analysis and further descriptions of reflectors and resonators see Lakin, "Solidly Mounted Resonators and Filters, 1995 IEEE Proc. Ultrasonics Symposium, pp. 905-908 and Lakin et al. "Development of Miniature Filters for Wireless Applications", IEEE Trans. on Microwave Theory and Techniques, Vol. 43, No. 12, December 1996, pp. 2933-2939.

As depicted in figure 1 hereof, U.S. Patent No. 5,821,833, for A Stacked Crystal Filter Device and Method of Making, Lakin, disclosed a bulk acoustic wave, stacked crystal filter 100, a supporting substrate 112 and an acoustic reflector 113 located between stacked crystal filter 100 and the substrate. Acoustic reflector 113 was made of a sequence of layers 108, 109, 110 and 111 of material having alternately high and low acoustic impedance. The stacked crystal filter comprised two layers 102 and 106 of piezoelectric material separated by a conducting electrode layer 103 and bounded on the top and bottom by conducting electrode layers 104 and 107. The top and middle electrodes provided a signal input port 101 and the middle and bottom electrodes provided a signal output port 121 with the middle electrode layer 103 being connected to signal ground 105. The stacked crystal filter exhibited high transmission of signals

1 from the input port to the output port for the signal frequency at
2 which the combined thicknesses of the two piezoelectric layers and
3 of the three electrode layers constituted approximately one-half
4 an acoustic wavelength. The stacked crystal filter, by itself,
5 also would have transmitted frequencies which were approximately
6 an integral multiple of said frequency for which the combined
7 thicknesses were approximately an integral multiple of one-half
8 an acoustic wavelength.

9
10 The thickness of each layer of material in the reflector
11 was one-quarter of an acoustic wavelength at the frequency at
12 which the stacked acoustic resonator had a thickness of one
13 acoustic wavelength and at this frequency the upper surface of
14 the reflector exhibited a very low impedance that reflected
15 substantially all of the acoustic wave from the resonator incident
16 upon the reflector. As a consequence the reflector facilitated
17 the transmission of signals by the stacked acoustic resonator at
18 that frequency. However, the transmission by the filter of
19 signals at higher frequencies for which the resonator thickness
20 was two, three or more times a half acoustic wavelength, were
21 inhibited because at these higher frequencies the layers of
22 material underlying the stacked crystal filter did not operate as
23 a reflector and did not isolate the acoustic vibrations of the
24 stacked crystal filter from the underlying substrate.

25
26 A different example of prior art is depicted in figure 2.
27 In this example a pair of stacked crystal filters 200 and 201
28 were mounted side by side upon a reflector and connected

1 electrically together in the manner depicted in figure 2 to
2 provide a filter in which the input port 205 to stacked filter
3 200 and the output port 221 from stacked filter 201 are both
4 located on the upper surface of the device. Electrode 204 and
5 the underlying portions of piezoelectric layers 202 and 206 and
6 the underlying portions of electrodes 203 and 207 comprise the two
7 resonators within stacked filter 200. Electrode 224 and the
8 underlying portions of piezoelectric layers 202 and 206 and the
9 underlying portions of electrodes 203 and 207 comprise the two
10 resonators within stacked filter 201. As depicted in figure 2,
11 electrodes 203 and 207 each constitute parts of both stacked
12 crystal filters and provide direct electrical connections between
13 the two stacked crystal filters. Because there are no intervening
14 layers between the two resonators within each stacked crystal
15 filter (other than the conducting electrode 203, the degree of the
16 coupling between the two resonators in each stack is fixed and may
17 not be adjusted. As a consequence the range of filter
18 characteristics that may be achieved by this configuration is
19 limited.

20
21 U.S. Patent Number 3,568,108 for a "Thin Film
22 Piezoelectric Filter", Poirier, disclosed the use of piezoelectric
23 semiconductors for use in resonators. The patent places special
24 importance upon the fact that the resonator in the patented device
25 utilizes piezoelectric layers which are also semiconductors. The
26 patent specification states that it is a characteristic of
27 piezoelectric semiconductor materials that an acoustic wave
28 propagating through the material generates a piezoelectric field

1 which interacts and exchanges energy with mobile charge carriers
2 driven through the medium by an external DC electric field and
3 states that when a DC voltage is applied to the medium it creates
4 a direct current [col. 1, ln. 48-57]. The sole independent claim
5 of the patent recites resonators that include an epitaxial film
6 having both piezoelectric and semiconductive properties [col. 4,
7 ln. 25-26]. Accordingly, the '108 patent discloses resonators
8 that utilize piezoelectrics that are also semiconductors having
9 semiconductive properties. The '108 patent does not disclose
10 resonators that use piezoelectric materials that are insulators.
11

12 The '108 patent discloses a filter comprising an input
13 resonator and an output resonator and the specification states
14 that the input rf electrical signal is filtered by virtue of the
15 different acoustical frequency-amplitude characteristics of the
16 (two) resonators [col. 4, ln 5-9]. Unfortunately the
17 specification does not clearly identify the elements that comprise
18 each resonator and the nature of these elements. At one point the
19 specification appears to disclose two resonators that are in
20 surface contact with each other [col. 3, ln. 31-33 and see the
21 areas encompassed by numbers 41 and 42 in FIG], while, in apparent
22 contradiction, independent claim 1 recites means disposed between
23 the resonators [col.4, ln. 35-36] and dependent claim 4 describes
24 said means as comprising a plurality of layers [col. 4, ln. 52-
25 54]. At one point the specification indicates that each of the
26 layers of material that intervene between the resonator electrodes
27 has a thickness of between $(2n+1)/4$ and $(n+1)/2$ acoustic
28 wavelengths [col. 3, ln. 52-54], while at another point the

1 specification indicates that each of these intervening layers has
2 a thickness of one-half acoustic wavelength [col. 3, ln. 63-65].
3 As a consequence, it is difficult to determine with certainty just
4 what art was disclosed in the specification.

5
6 In any case the specification states that the extend
7 (sic - extent) to which the frequency-amplitude characteristics of
8 the resonators overlap substantially determines the electrical
9 characteristics of the filter [col. 4, ln. 7-9]. It is not
10 apparent whether the foregoing statement is based on the fact, or
11 perhaps the assumption, that an interaction between the rf
12 electric fields and a DC flow of mobile carriers within the
13 piezoelectric semiconductors would cause the coupling between the
14 resonators to be unidirectional, thus causing the resonators to
15 exhibit a filter characteristic that was simply the product of the
16 resonance properties of the two resonators, or instead was based
17 upon an assumption that the two resonators were only weakly
18 coupled to each other. Or perhaps this statement was based upon
19 some other undisclosed element or characteristic of the device.
20 In any case, the patent does not disclose the use of an insulating
21 piezoelectric material in the resonators, and does not disclose
22 the use of intervening layers of material between a pair of
23 resonators, the parameters of which intervening layers are
24 selected to control the coupling between the resonators so as to
25 produce a filter whose transfer characteristic is not simply the
26 product of the frequency responses of the individual resonators.

1 U.S. Patent No. 4,349,796 for Devices Incorporating Phonon
2 Filters, Chin et al., disclosed the use of a superlattice of one-
3 hundred alternating layers of GaAs and AlGaAs. The superlattice
4 was located between a superconducting tunnel junction that
5 generated acoustic wave phonons at one end of the superlattice and
6 a second superconducting tunnel junction that was located at the
7 other end of the superlattice and detected phonons that passed
8 through the superlattice. The patent specification described a
9 superlattice, in which each layer had a thickness of one-quarter
10 of an acoustic wavelength and that selectively reflected phonons
11 to produce a quasi-monochromatic source of phonons. The patent
12 also described a superlattice, in which each layer had a thickness
13 of one-half of an acoustic wavelength, that selectively
14 transmitted phonons through the lattice to provide a quasi-
15 monochromatic source of phonons. The present invention differs
16 from the device disclosed in the '796 patent because the present
17 invention uses acoustic resonators, instead of superconducting
18 tunnel junctions, as input and output devices. Furthermore, the
19 present invention uses a small number of intervening layers of
20 material to adjust the bilateral acoustic coupling between the
21 acoustic resonators so that the frequency response characteristics
22 of the closely coupled resonators produce the desired filtering
23 properties between the input and output ports of the device. In
24 contrast to the present invention, in the '796 device the
25 superlattice, itself, provides the frequency selective properties
26 of the device.

1 (f). BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

2
3 The present invention utilizes thin-film, bulk acoustic
4 wave resonators that use piezoelectric materials that are
5 insulators and not semiconductors and that, as a consequence,
6 avoid the debilitating losses that otherwise would result from the
7 use of semiconducting piezoelectric materials. The terms
8 "insulator" or "insulators" are used herein with respect to a
9 piezoelectric material as meaning a material for which the
10 conductivity is low enough such that the interaction of any
11 conductive current with acoustic waves propagating at microwave
12 frequencies within the material would be insufficient to create a
13 significant asymmetry in the acoustic properties of the material
14 and would normally not constitute the major loss mechanism for
15 acoustic waves propagating through the material. For the purposes
16 of this invention, an insulator means a material that has a
17 dielectric relaxation frequency that is less than one-tenth of the
18 frequency of the acoustic wave propagating through the material.
19

20 In this device, the layers of material intervening between
21 the two resonators are selected to control the acoustic coupling
22 between the two resonators so that the coupled resonators produce
23 a filter transfer characteristic, S_{21} , that is more complex than
24 simply the product of the frequency responses of the two,
25 individual resonators. By adjusting the degree of the coupling
26 between the resonators to be substantially equal to or greater
27 than critical coupling, the transfer characteristic for the filter
28 can be specially adapted to many applications. For example, the

1 transfer characteristic of this device can have a broader peak and
2 steeper sides than could be obtained by using two resonators that
3 are only weakly coupled together or for which the coupling between
4 the resonators is not bilateral.

5
6 (g) BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS
7

8 Figure 1 depicts a stacked crystal filter of the prior art
9 and figure 2 depicts two stacked crystal filters connected in
10 series to provide both input and output ports located upon the
11 upper surface of the device.

12
13 Figure 3 depicts one embodiment of the present invention,
14 namely a filter comprised of two acoustically coupled bulk
15 acoustic wave resonators separated by intervening layers of
16 material that control the amount of acoustic coupling between the
17 resonators, which filter is supported by an acoustic reflector
18 mounted upon a substrate. Figure 4 depicts two sets of
19 acoustically coupled bulk acoustic wave resonators, which sets
20 are electrically connected in series with each other to make a
21 filter having both input and output ports located upon the upper
22 surface of the device.

23
24 Figure 5 conceptually depicts the configuration of the
25 conducting electrode layers of one embodiment of the invention and
26 figure 6 similarly depicts another configuration of these
27 electrodes. Figure 7 depicts another embodiment of the invention
28 that includes additional resonators in the stacks of resonators,

1 which additional resonators can be electrically connected to
2 external impedances which may be used to alter the properties of
3 the filter.
4

5 Figure 8 depicts examples of the filter transfer
6 characteristic, S_{21} , for a pair of resonators having various
7 amounts of acoustic coupling between the resonators. Figure 9
8 depicts the measured transfer characteristic for an experimental
9 filter fabricated as a pair of acoustically coupled resonators
10 electrically connected in series with a second pair of
11 acoustically coupled resonators and designed to provide a filter
12 with its pass-band centered at 2,140 Mhz. The filter is
13 configured in the manner depicted in figure 4 with the electrodes
14 configured as depicted in figure 6. Figure 10 depicts the
15 transfer characteristic of a similar filter designed and
16 fabricated to provide a filter pass-band centered at 942.5 Mhz.
17

18 Figure 11 displays the filter transfer characteristic
19 calculated for a first filter comprised of a pair of acoustically
20 coupled resonators electrically connected to a second pair of
21 acoustically coupled resonators, and for a second filter which is
22 the same as the first filter except that the thickness of each of
23 the electrodes has been increased by a small amount.
24

25 Figure 12 is a table listing various parameters for
26 filters described in this specification.
27
28

1 (h) DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

2
3 Figure 3 depicts one embodiment of the filter comprising
4 this invention. Resonator 300 consists of electrodes 304 and 303
5 located upon the upper and lower surfaces of a piezoelectric layer
6 302 of material and that portion of piezoelectric layer 302 that
7 is sandwiched between the overlapping portions of electrodes 304
8 and 303. Connectors 301 and 305 provide electrical connections to
9 resonator 300 and operate as an input port. Resonator 313
10 consists of electrodes 314 and 307 located upon the upper and
11 lower surfaces of piezoelectric layer 306 together with that
12 portion of piezoelectric layer 306 that is sandwiched between
13 the overlapping portions of electrodes 314 and 307. Connectors
14 315 and 316 provide electrical connections to resonator 313 and
15 operate as an output port. Piezoelectric layers 302 and 306 are
16 made of a piezoelectric material, such as AlN, ZnO, LiNbO₃, in a
17 form such that the material constitutes an insulator and not a
18 semiconductor. The piezoelectric material in piezoelectric layer
19 302 may be, but need not be, the same as the piezoelectric
20 material in piezoelectric layer 306. Because the resonators 300
21 and 313 exhibit an acoustic resonance at signal frequencies for
22 which the combined thickness of the layer of piezoelectric
23 material and the bounding electrodes is approximately one-half of
24 an acoustic wavelength, or an odd integral multiple thereof, an
25 electrical signal input to the input port is filterd by these
26 acoustic resonances so that a substantial amount of the input
27 signal is transferred to the output port only for frequencies near
28

1 which the acoustic resonators resonate. The input and output
2 ports of this filter could, of course, be interchanged.

3
4 Resonators 300 and 313 are separated by intervening layers
5 350, 351 and 352 of material having various acoustic impedances
6 and nominal thicknesses of one-quarter acoustic wavelength at the
7 center frequency of the operation of the filter. The acoustic
8 impedance of one or more of layers 350, 351 and 352 is adjusted or
9 selected so as to achieve the desired degree of coupling between
10 resonator 300 and resonator 313 to obtain a desired filter
11 bandpass characteristic. The acoustic impedance of these layers
12 can be adjusted by changing the growth parameters and/or by
13 selecting the materials comprising these layers. Although this
14 example uses three intervening layers, it should be understood
15 that the filter might use a fewer or greater number of intervening
16 layers to obtain the desired degree of coupling between the
17 resonators.

18
19 Figure 8 depicts calculated values of the filter transfer
20 characteristic, S_{21} , for example devices similar to the one
21 depicted in figure 3 in which the number and composition of the
22 intervening layers has been selected to provide different amounts
23 of acoustic coupling between the resonators. Curve 83 depicts the
24 transfer characteristic provided by a device that utilized a
25 single intervening layer to provide a high degree of coupling,
26 curve 82 depicts the transfer characteristic provided by three
27 intervening layers to provide a lesser degree of coupling, and
28 curve 81 depicts the transfer characteristic obtained using 5

1 intervening layers to provide even less coupling between the
2 resonators. Curve 81 has a single, relatively narrow peak and
3 exemplifies a pair of resonators that are under-coupled. Curve 82
4 has a broad and flat peak and exemplifies a pair of resonators
5 that are critically-coupled and curve 83, which has a still
6 broader width and which exhibits two adjacent peaks with a dip
7 between the peaks, exemplifies two resonators that are over-
8 coupled. The terms under-coupled, critically-coupled and over-
9 coupled are use here by analogy to the manner in which such terms
10 are used in the analysis of coupled resonant electrical circuits,
11 see, e.g., "Electronic and Radio Engineering", by Frederick
12 Terman, McGraw-Hill, 4th Ed., section 3-5, pp. 63-74. The
13 transfer characteristic for the coupled resonators using a
14 particular number of intervening layers could, of course, be
15 further modified by changing the composition and thicknesses of
16 the intervening layers.

17
18 Layers 308, 309, 310 and 311 each have a thickness of
19 approximately one-quarter acoustic wavelength at the center
20 frequency of the filter pass-band and the layers have alternating
21 high and low acoustic impedances. The layers 308 through 311
22 together act as an acoustic mirror or acoustic reflector to
23 isolate the vibrations of the resonators from the underlying
24 substrate 312. It should be understood that such the reflector
25 could, instead, comprise a lesser or greater number of layers.

26
27 Figure 4 depicts the preferred embodiment of the
28 invention, which embodiment consists of the duplication, side by

00000000-4404
1 side, of the pair of resonators depicted in figure 3 and the
2 electrical connection in series of these two pairs of resonators
3 to form a filter. The first pair of coupled resonators 421 and
4 422 is connected in series with the second set of coupled
5 resonators 423 and 424 by means of the electrical continuity of
6 electrodes 440 and 441, which electrodes bound both resonators 422
7 and 423 and also electrically connect the signal output from
8 resonator 422 to the input of resonator 423. Electrodes 404 and
9 403 provide a signal input port to the entire device via
10 connectors 401 and 405 and electrodes 427 and 407 provide a signal
11 output port for the entire device via connectors 430 and 417.
12

13 Intervening layers 450, 451 and 452 are each
14 approximately one-quarter acoustic wavelength in thickness at the
15 center frequency of the filter pass-band and the acoustic
16 impedances of these layers are selected to provide the desired
17 degree of coupling between resonators 421 and 422 and between
18 resonators 423 and 424. It should be understood that more or less
19 than three intervening layers of material could be used for this
20 purpose and that the nominal thicknesses of these layers need not
21 necessarily be one-quarter acoustic wavelength. For example, in
22 an instance where four intervening layers provide too little
23 coupling between the resonators and three intervening layers
24 provide too much coupling, the thicknesses of one or more of the
25 intervening layers could be adjusted to "fine tune" the coupling
26 to obtain the desired amount of coupling between the resonators.
27 It should also be understood that the portions of layers 450, 451
28 and 452 that lie between resonators 421 and 422 need not be the

1 same in composition, thickness or number as compared to the
2 portions of these layers that lie between resonators 423 and 424.
3

4 Layers 408, 409, 410 and 411 act as an acoustic mirror or
5 reflector to isolate the vibrations of the resonators from the
6 underlying substrate 412.
7

8 Although in figure 4 each of electrodes 440 and 441 is
9 depicted as a uniform conducting layer, the transverse boundaries
10 of each electrode are configured so as to avoid creating parasitic
11 resonators within the region not underlying either resonator 421
12 or resonator 424. Figure 5 depicts how the transverse boundaries
13 of the various electrodes depicted in figure 4 are arranged so as
14 to avoid the creation of parasitic resonators that otherwise might
15 degrade the performance of the filter. Figure 5 conceptually
16 (i.e. the thicknesses of the electrodes are not depicted) depicts
17 only the electrodes and omits the piezoelectric layers, omits the
18 various other intervening layers, omits the layers comprising the
19 reflector and omits the substrate. The transverse dimensions of
20 the omitted layers and of the substrate need not be bounded in the
21 manner depicted in figure 5 and may, instead, extend beyond the
22 transverse dimensions of the various electrodes. The electrodes
23 in figure 4 that are depicted in figure 5 are identified by the
24 same numbers in both figures.
25

26 Referring now to figure 5, with the exception of the
27 connector tabs 447 extending from the sides of electrodes 404,
28 403, ⁴²⁷424 and 407, and the connecting portion 442 of electrode 441,
16

1 the transverse boundaries of electrode 404 coincide with the
2 transverse boundaries of electrode 403 and the outer transverse
3 boundary of electrode 441. With similar exceptions, the
4 transverse boundaries of electrode 427 coincide with the
5 transverse boundaries of electrode 407 and the outer transverse
6 boundary of electrode 441. The transverse boundaries of electrode
7 441 include the connecting portion 442, which connecting portion
8 electrically connects the portions of electrode 441 that
9 respectively underlie electrodes 404 and 427. Electrode 440 has a
10 void 490, two boundaries of which void 490 coincide with the
11 boundaries of electrodes 404 and 427 that are adjacent to each
12 other. The remaining two boundaries of void 490 coincide with, or
13 extend outside of, the nearby boundaries of electrode 441. The
14 void 490 in electrode 440 prevents the underlying portion of
15 piezoelectric layer 406 and the underlying portion of electrode
16 441, namely the connecting portion 442, from acting as a parasitic
17 acoustic resonator. Thus void 490 acoustically separates the
18 operation of resonator 422 from resonator 423. However, because
19 void 490 does not electrically separate the portion of electrode
20 440 that comprises part of resonator 422 from the portion of
21 electrode 440 that comprises part of resonator 423, these two
22 resonators are electrically, but not acoustically connected.
23 Boundaries 443 and 444 of electrode 440 extend beyond the
24 respective nearby boundaries of electrode 441. Boundaries 445 and
25 446 coincide with the respective nearby boundaries of electrode
26 441 and thereby avoid the formation of parasitic resonators that
27 otherwise might be created in those portions of the piezoelectric
28 layers that underlie the tabs extending from the sides of

8

1 electrodes 403, 404, 407 and 427. In some circumstances the
2 boundaries 445 and 446 of electrode 440 could be extended outside
3 of the respective boundaries of electrodes 403, 404, 407 and ⁴²⁷424.
4 However, to avoid the possible creation of parasitic resonances,
5 one then might include voids in those portions of layer 440 that
6 underlie the tabs extending from the sides of electrodes 403, 404,
7 407 and 427 so as reduce the likelihood that the portions of
8 electrode 440 underlying these tabs might contribute unwanted
9 capacitance between electrode 440 and these tabs or, where
10 piezoelectric material is situated between one or more of the tabs
11 and electrode 440, might create parasitic resonators.

12
13 Figure 4 depicts two pairs of coupled resonators in which
14 first pair is located beside the second pair and utilizes
15 electrodes and layers of material that appear to have the same
16 thickness in the first pair as they have in the second pair of
17 resonators. It should be understood, however, that the device
18 could, instead, be fabricated such that these thicknesses are not
19 necessarily the same for these two pairs of resonators. For
20 example, electrodes 427 and 407 could be fabricated to have
21 greater thicknesses than the corresponding electrodes 403 and
22 404, which would cause the resonant frequency of resonator 424 to
23 be slightly lower than the resonant frequency of resonator 421.
24 Similarly the portions of electrodes 440 and 441 that comprise
25 part of resonator 423 could be fabricated to be thicker than the
26 portions of these electrodes that comprise part of resonator 422
27 and thus would cause the resonant frequency of resonator 423 to be
28 slightly lower than the resonant frequency of resonator 422. The

1 thicknesses of the other layers of material in the device could
2 similarly be altered on one half of the device relative to the
3 other half and thus alter the filter characteristics for the
4 combination. One can use this ability to alter the properties of
5 one pair of resonators relative to the other pair of resonators to
6 facilitate the design of filters having desired characteristics.

7
8 Figure 4 depicts a device that may be operated with its
9 input and output port in a balanced configuration, i.e. the two
10 input connections that provide an input port can receive signals
11 that are balanced with respect to ground. The output port may be
12 operated in a similar manner. The input and output ports could,
13 instead, be configured to receive and send signals that are
14 unbalanced with respect to ground, i.e. in which one of the two
15 connectors of each port is grounded. In this instance electrodes
16 403 and 407 could be internally connected electrically and
17 connected to ground via connectors 405 and 430. In a manner
18 similar to that of figure 5, figure 6 depicts the electrode layers
19 in the configuration in which electrodes 403 and 407 are
20 contiguous portions of the same layer 601 of conducting material.
21 In this circumstance, layer 601 of conducting material has a void
22 602 from which the conducting material is excluded. Void 602
23 removes the capacitance that otherwise would be exist between
24 conducting layer 601 and electrode 441 and avoids the creation of
25 a parasitic resonator that might otherwise be formed by electric
26 fields from the area of the void to the underlying portion of
27 electrode 441. If the effective acoustic and electrical distances
28 between electrode 441 and conducting layer 601 are large enough

1 such that the capacitance and parasitic resonator effects are
2 insignificant, then layer 601 need not include void 602.

3
4 The length and width of conducting layer 601 need not be
5 limited in the manner depicted in figure 6 but, instead, could
6 extend well beyond the area covered by electrodes 404 and 427,
7 e.g. across the entire lateral dimensions of the device. However,
8 in that instance, conducting layer 601 should also include voids
9 underlying the tabs extending from the sides of electrodes 404 and
10 427 in order to avoid the creation of parasitic resonators
11 underlying these tabs.

12
13 Although most of the embodiments of the invention
14 described above are depicted as being supported upon a substrate
15 by a sequence of layers of material that act as an acoustic
16 isolator or acoustic mirror or reflector, it should be understood
17 that these embodiments could, instead, be fabricated as thin
18 membranes that are not supported on a substrate by means of an
19 acoustic isolator. For example the membrane could be supported at
20 its periphery by a robust structure in the manner described in
21 U.S. Patent Nos. 3,694,677 and 4,320,365.

22
23 Figures 9 and 10 depict the transfer characteristics of
24 two of devices of this invention having the configuration
25 depicted in figure 4 with the electrodes configured as depicted
26 in figure 6. Figure 12 contains a table that lists the type of
27 material in, and the the thicknesses of, various layers of these
28 devices.

1
2 The basic concept of this invention may be extended to
3 more complex structures. For example, figure 7 depicts two, side
4 by side, stacks of acoustically coupled resonators with the two
5 stacks connected in series to provide input and output ports at
6 the upper surfaces of the stacks. Referring to figure 7,
7 electrodes 703 and 704 together with the portion of piezoelectric
8 layer 702 sandwiched between the overlapping portions of
9 electrodes 703 and 704 form acoustic resonator 707 with input
10 connectors 701 and 705. Electrodes 724 and 717 together with the
11 portion of piezoelectric layer 702 sandwiched between the
12 overlapping portions of electrodes 724 and 717 form acoustic
13 resonator 712 with output connectors 720 and 721.

14
15 Electrodes 730 and 731 together with the portion of
16 piezoelectric layer 790 that is sandwiched between the overlapping
17 portions of electrodes 730 and 731 form acoustic resonator 708 and
18 electrodes 733 and 734 together with the portion of piezoelectric
19 layer 790 that is sandwiched between the overlapping portions of
20 electrodes 733 and 734 form acoustic resonator 711. The portions
21 of electrodes 740 and 741 together with the portion of
22 piezoelectric layer 706 that underlie resonator 708 form resonator
23 709 and the respective portions that underlie resonator 711 form
24 resonator 710. Because electrodes 740 and 741 encompass both
25 resonators 709 and 710, the two stacks of resonators are
26 electrically connected together in series. In a manner similar to
27 that depicted in figure 5, one or the other of electrodes 740 or
28 741 would include a void in the conducting layer so that a

1 parasitic resonator would not be created in the region encompassed
2 by the void.

3
4 Intervening layers 750, 751 and 752 are made of materials
5 having alternating high and low values of acoustic impedance and
6 these layers control the amount of the acoustic coupling between
7 resonators 707 and 708 and between resonators 711 and 712.

8 Similarly, intervening layers 780, 781 and 782 control the amount
9 of the acoustic coupling between resonators 708 and 709 and
10 between resonators 710 and 711. Although figure 7, in each
11 instance, depicts three intervening layers, it should be
12 understood that different numbers of layers could, instead, be
13 used to control the degree of acoustic coupling between the
14 various acoustic resonators. As depicted in figure 7, external
15 impedances such as loads 770 and 771 could be electrically
16 connected to one or more of the resonators of this device to alter
17 and adjust the characteristics of the filter formed by connection
18 in series of the side by side stack of resonators.

19
20 Although resonators 708 and 711 are described above as
21 being comprised of the respective portions of piezoelectric layer
22 790 bounded by electrodes 730 and 731 and by electrodes 733 and
23 734, these portions of the piezoelectric layer having a thickness
24 of one-half an acoustic wavelength, or an odd multiple thereof,
25 and which underlie resonators 707 and 712 respectively, could
26 still function as acoustic resonators in the absence of electrodes
27 730, 731, 733 and 734. Furthermore, layer 790 need not be made of
28 a piezoelectric material in order for these portions of the layer

1 to function as acoustic resonators. One would, however, then be
2 unable to alter the properties of resonators 708 and 711 by
3 electrically connecting external impedances to these resonators.
4 If no external loads are attached to resonators 708 and 711, the
5 electrodes that bound resonators 708 and 711 can be eliminated and
6 then these resonators may have thicknesses of one half an acoustic
7 wavelength or any integral multiple thereof. The comment in the
8 preceding sentence applies to each of the resonators in the
9 configurations described in this specification whenever the
10 resonator is not electrically connected to another resonator, port
11 or other device.

12
13 Resonators 707, 712, 709 and 710, however, have to have
14 thicknesses of approximately one-half an acoustic wavelength or an
15 odd multiple thereof in order that a non-zero voltage be produced,
16 at resonance, between the bounding electrodes.

17
18 Although the embodiment depicted on figure 7 is not
19 supported upon a substrate by a series of layers constituting an
20 acoustic reflector or isolator, it should be understood that the
21 device could be supported in this manner.

22
23 Figure 11 depicts transmission coefficients, S_{21} ,
24 calculated for filters having the configuration depicted in figure
25 4 with the layers having the thicknesses and compositions listed
26 in figure 12. Curve 91 depicts the coefficient for the layers
27 listed in figure 12 for filter 91 and curve 92 depicts the
28 coefficient for the layers listed in figure 12 for filter 92. The

1 only differences in the construction of the devices are
2 differences in the thicknesses of the electrodes bounding the
3 resonators. Changing the thicknesses of these electrodes changes
4 the resonant frequencies of the resonators and, as indicated in
5 figure 11, shifts the center frequency of the pass-band of the
6 filter. When only a few layers of intervening material control
7 the coupling between the resonators, changes made to the
8 intervening layers alter the degree of coupling and, as a
9 consequence, the shape of the pass-band. However, as illustrated
10 in figure 11, it is the acoustic dimensions of the resonators,
11 themselves, that primarily control the frequency at which the
12 pass-band of the filter is located. It is only when a device
13 utilizes a large number of intervening layers, such as that
14 disclosed by Chin et al., in U.S. Patent No. 4,349,796, that the
15 properties of the intervening layers, alone, determine the
16 frequency at which the pass-band is located.

17
18 The curves depicted in figure 11 also illustrate that one
19 can fabricate a number of filters upon a single wafer and adjust
20 the center frequency of the pass-band of each filter simply by
21 altering only the thickness of the electrodes in each filter
22 without altering the parameters of the other layers of the
23 filters. As a consequence, on a single wafer one can fabricate
24 many filters and adjust the center frequency of the pass-band of
25 the individual filters simply by altering the thicknesses of the
26 resonator electrodes as part of the fabrication process.

1 In the devices described above, if the piezoelectric
2 layers have high piezoelectric coupling coefficients, and the
3 input and output ports are loaded sufficiently by the impedances
4 of the external electrical circuitry, then the width of the pass-
5 band of each loaded resonator will be relatively broad. If the
6 coupling between the various resonators also is substantial, i.e.
7 approximately critically-coupled or over-coupled, then the
8 bandwidth of the filter may be sufficiently broad such that the
9 bandwidth is determined not only by the frequency responses of the
10 coupled resonators, but also by the frequency response of the
11 intervening layers that control the coupling between the various
12 resonators. Such a circumstance can arise, for example, with as
13 few as five to seven intervening quarter-wave layers of material
14 between the resonators when the piezoelectric layers are made of
15 a material such as LiNbO_3 which has a high piezoelectric coupling
16 coefficient. In such a circumstance, the parameters of the
17 resonators as well as of the intervening layers must be selected
18 so as to obtain the desired width and shape of the pass-band.

19
20 All of the embodiments described above are two-port
21 devices in which a signal is input to the input port and the
22 device filters the signal that passes to the output port and
23 allows a substantial amount of the input signal to be output at
24 the output port only if the signal frequency lies within the pass-
25 band of the device. However, it should be understood that each
26 of these devices could, instead, be operated as a one port device
27 in which the variation with change in frequency of the input
28 impedance at the single port of the device is used as a filter to

